

Arts Audiences

A partnership initiative of the Arts Council and Temple Bar Cultural Trust

Develop an online marketing campaign for the exhibition *Sidney Nolan, Ned Kelly Series* by the Irish Museum of Modern Art

Our aim

Our aim was to run an online marketing campaign that would result in actual visits to the Museum. We also wanted to increase our engagement with our existing online audience and build new audiences using the Sidney Nolan exhibition as a vehicle to do this.

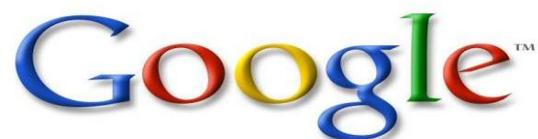
Goals

1. Increase visitor numbers to the Sidney Nolan exhibition.
2. Create more engagement with our existing online audience.
3. Develop new audiences to IMMA via our website and social media.
4. Raise IMMA's online profile to create greater awareness of the Museum.

Background

Since 31 May 2012 the Irish Museum of Modern Art's has been based in two separate locations due to extensive refurbishment works being carried out on the main building at the RHK. This has been a challenging time for us as we have had to promote two sites, a new site in the National Concert Hall building in Earlsfort Terrace while continuing to promote the New Galleries at the Royal Hospital in Kilmainham. This has caused some confusion for visitors to IMMA, many thinking we are only open in our off-site venue and that IMMA is closed. While we wanted to entice our existing audience to a new site we also wanted visitors to continue to visit IMMA and make them aware it was still open for business although on a smaller scale. It was important for us to keep a presence at our IMMA site in the RHK as this is where we will return to in October 2013.

As a result of this we decided to apply for the Google Mentoring Scheme to help us promote the exhibition *Sidney Nolan, Ned Kelly Series presented by Etihad Airways* in the New Galleries at IMMA. This exhibition presented the famous *Ned Kelly* series of paintings by the celebrated Australian artist Sidney Nolan.



Why an online marketing campaign

For this exhibition we had in place all the other avenues we would normally cover – a strong publicity campaign, a media sponsor and promotional material. We felt in order to really push for an increase in visitor numbers we needed to look at other avenues that we had not explored to their full potential. This is where we saw the opportunity of the Google Mentoring Scheme. If we could run a strategic online marketing campaign with the help of our Google mentor would this result in an increase in our visitor numbers and online audiences.

Our existing online presence

Although we have all the requirements – website, facebook, twitter, Google Analytics – we have never run an online campaign and felt we needed the expertise of a Google mentor to guide us on how to achieve this. The experience and knowledge could then be transferred to create other online campaigns for future exhibitions and projects.

Mentoring Process

On meeting my mentor Marie Davis I outlined what we wanted to achieve and the tools that IMMA had to do so. We decided to run our online marketing campaign in the month of January. This would give us time to set up and look at all the aspects of the campaign while also not trying to compete with the December christmas retail push. January is a month when people had time to visit an exhibition and are looking for something to do for free. I attended both one on one sessions with Marie and group sessions on Google Adwords, Google Analytics, Youtube and Google+.

It was clear we needed to apply for a Google Grant in order to run a **Google Adwords** campaign. As we had charity status we were eligible to apply and were guided through this process so that the grant was in place by December. We were extremely grateful to receive this grant and that we will continue to do so for future use. Marie worked with us to set up the account so that we had our adverts in place to run for the month of January. This one on one session was invaluable as when sitting down to go through this process it can seem daunting and complicated and to have it explained and your questions answered there and then was great. We also set up a general campaign to promote the Museum overall in order to build awareness of IMMA.

We had **Google Analytics** set up for our website but were unclear on how to use it to its full potential or how to read the results correctly. Our group session on this was extremely useful. Our website www.imma.ie is an old site and in need of an upgrade but does meet the requirements of the Museum through online booking systems and regularly updated information. A very useful tip was to improve the landing page, in our case the exhibition page, and make it more engaging. We had links on our site to everything from our homepage but not from the exhibition page. We amended our content and shortened our long text, included links to all the talks, events, opening hours etc., from the exhibition page itself and by doing this we greatly reduced our bounce rate. A very basic change but something we had missed out on. We also learned how to use analytics to its full potential so we could see what was working and what was not.

IMMA also had set up a **YouTube** channel, IMMAIreland, but it was pretty much inactive with just a few talks on it. Marie helped to set this page up correctly so that it was more

visually enticing. Although we have a long way to go in developing our channel we did put up a video made by our sponsors Etihad Airways of the Sidney Nolan paintings being transported to Ireland. We also set up a playlist to accompany this video. We only received this video towards the end of the exhibition opening so did not get to promote it to its full potential.

Our final session was on **Google+** and an introduction to this was very useful as I was unclear exactly how to use this and learned it was far more than just another social network. As this was our final session and our campaign was over we still have to spend time on setting this up correctly and using it to its full potential.

Social Media - IMMA has a good online presence through its facebook page and our twitter account @IMMAIreland. We wanted to use our social media as part of our online marketing campaign. Although we have a lot of likes on facebook page our level of engagement is very low. We wanted to build our engagement with our existing audience and attract new audiences. We felt that we were spending a lot of time on social media but is our time well spent and could we be more effective with more targeted campaigns or offers which would engage our audiences better? We decided to try and think creatively on how to engage our online audience. The Sidney Nolan exhibition had 26 paintings in it and the artist had, in an interview, commented on each work which tied in nicely with posting and tweeting a painting a day during the month of January. We got a good response to this campaign, it enticed people to come and see the works themselves and the artists comment added a personal element. On an awareness level it also allowed people who could not visit the exhibition see the artwork.

Results of the online promotional campaign for *Sidney Nolan, Ned Kelly Series*

We compared our results from the Sidney Nolan exhibition to an exhibition by the Brazilian artist Rivane Neuenschwander which took place in the New Galleries in January 2012. The main Museum building had closed for refurbishment in November 2011 so we were also in a similar position then as we are now. We also had a strong publicity campaign and promotional material for the Neuenschwander exhibition. In January 2012 we didn't have a second venue to compete with and were able to concentrate solely on the one exhibition therefore January 2013 was a more challenging time for us.

Actual visitors to the exhibition

Total visitor figures to each exhibition:

Rivane Neuenschwander 16 Nov 2011 to 29 Jan 2012 = **8,284**

Sidney Nolan 2 Nov 2012 to 27 Jan 2013 = **13,573**

Result: Overall there was an increase of more than 5000 visitors to the Sidney Nolan exhibition.

Total visitor figures for the month of January only:

Rivane Neuenschwander in January 2012 = 1,669

Sidney Nolan in January 2013 = 4,884

Result: In the month of January the Sidney Nolan exhibition received almost three times the number of visitors as the same period in 2012.

Compare visitor figure for Sidney Nolan exhibition in December 2012 to January 2013:

The visitor figure for Sidney Nolan in Dec 2012 was 3,046 and in Jan 2013 was 4,884.

Result: There was an increase of 1,838 visitors to the Sidney Nolan exhibition in the month of January compared to the previous month.

Google AdWords

We ran two campaigns, one for the Sidney Nolan exhibition and a second general campaign to promote greater awareness of IMMA.

Sidney Nolan AdWords Campaign:

We ran four adverts and the average click through rate was 1.48%

Result: Our click through rate for these adverts is considered good. We had a high click through rate throughout the month and our choice of keywords were from the start a good match. We received a lot of good publicity around the exhibition and Marie pointed out to us when something appears in the paper the next avenue for many people is to search for it on the internet and therefore our publicity campaign and Google AdWords campaign worked well alongside each other. Particular search terms that worked well for us was 'Contemporary Art Exhibition', 'Art in Ireland' and 'Art Exhibition Ireland'.

Irish Museum of Modern Art General AdWords Campaign:

We ran four adverts and the average click through rate for the month of January was 5.37%

Result: This campaign continues to run and is doing very well. It offers a general overview of who we are and one advert carries the current exhibition on offer.

Google Analytics

We compared statistics for the Rivane Neuenschwander exhibition in January 2012 to the Sidney Nolan exhibition in January 2013.

	2012	2013	Result
Visits to site	8776	22,694	up 159%
Unique visits	7553	17,233	up 128%
Visit duration	37 secs	1.35	increased by 1 minute
Bounce rate	88.95%	41%	reduced by -53%
Page Visits	1.21	2.75	up 128%
<i>Traffic sources direct</i>			
Google.ie/referral	9	420	up 4,567%
Facebook	27	345	up 11178%
<i>Visits to landing page</i>			
RN versus SN	33	352	up over 300 visits

Other Activity

Catalogue Sales

We asked our bookshop to monitor Sidney Nolan catalogue sales. In November they sold 90, December 79 and in January 159.

Results: Sales of the catalogue doubled during the month of January. Even allowing for an upsurge in last minute visitors, who are often the biggest purchasers, this figure is beyond what we would normally achieve especially in the month of January which is a quite retail time.

Social Media

Facebook and Twitter

We ran a successful facebook and twitter campaign for the Rivane Neuenschwander exhibition in January 2012, we posted a wish a day from an interactive art work which people responded really well too. We compared this campaign with our Sidney Nolan campaign of posting and tweeting a painting a day with a personal comment on each work by the artist.

Facebook	Jan 2012	Jan 2013
New likes	161	189
Weekly total reach	457 to peak 4152	563 to peak 7704
Talking about this	47 to peak 182	37 to peak 197

Results: The weekly total reach was 3000 more than on the previous year. While talking about this and new likes were similar for both.

Twitter

Dec 2012 = 6232 followers

Jan 2013 = 6986 followers

Results: An increase of 754 followers in month of January

Overall Results

As IMMA is not a ticketed venue it is more difficult to gauge success rates but the results clearly show that there was a significant increase in activity in all areas from actual visitors to the exhibition, visitors to the website, through social media and sales in catalogues.

Challenges

- The biggest challenge for us was the investment of time that was required to make this campaign a success. Although we were guided through the whole process it required a substantial amount of time in keeping on top of all the various elements. With reduced staff resources this was difficult but the results do show that the investment does pay off.
- As we did not have to spend money on the online campaign the argument that we can do all this without a marketing budget has arisen. I felt that the publicity campaign and the promotional adverts worked in tandem with the online campaign to increase numbers to the exhibition. We would feel strongly that there is still, if possible, a need to receive a marketing budget and that online marketing is just one element of an overall promotional campaign. A marketing budget could also be put towards online display advertising and when receiving media sponsorship in future we will also try to get display advertising as part of this.

Conclusion and future plans

- We will continue to focus on running online marketing campaigns for future exhibitions as the investment of time does give results. As a result of this process we now have a digital marketing intern working with us.
- This process has underlined our need for a new website and we have a much better idea of what our website needs to do. We hope to achieve this in 2014.
- Our session on Youtube encouraged us to look at how we can make videos on very little resources and this is something we are planning to focus in the upcoming exhibition, *I knOw yoU*, which has some 50 young artists who have a lot of content we can work with.
- To get our Google+ account up and running and look at the possibility of doing hangouts with some of the visiting artists.

Overall IMMA will now incorporate and develop an online marketing campaign for each exhibition as an essential element of every promotional campaign. It will be an integral part of all marketing activity. A Big Thanks to my mentor Marie Davis and to all at Google for this very worthwhile and invaluable experience!